REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated January 26, 2006, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 8, 15, and 17-22 are now pending in the present application.

I.   Rejection of claims 8 and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8 and 17-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,195,694) in view of Narayen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,035,323).

Claim 8

Claim 8 recites "An image data management system." The Examiner asserts that Chen discloses an image data management system. However, Chen is directed to a server for reconfiguring control of a subset of devices on one or more kiosks. Chen teaches that in the past, kiosks were preprogrammed and defined to perform particular tasks. Chen addresses this problem by managing the kiosks via a server. Therefore, instead of requiring the kiosks to be preprogrammed, the server, which contains one or more application files that the server serves to the one or more kiosks, need only be programmed. In addition, Chen is concerned with providing financial applications such as opening accounts, paying bills, making a mortgage payment, making a telephone call, fax transmission, and teleconferencing. See Chen claims 10 and 15. However, Chen is not at all concerned with managing *image data*.

Claim 8 further recites "*a plurality of printing stations* with functions to *read* digital image data, to print the data by performing necessary *image processing* and to transmit or receive the image data." The Examiner asserts that the CD ROM player, floppy disk and video conference system, as discussed in col. 4, lines 47-48, lines 55-56 and col. 15, lines 31-38, have functions to read digital image data. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that the CD ROM player, floppy disk or video conference system read digital image data. The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner merely indicate the existence of input/output devices such as a CD ROM and a video conference system and that a floppy disk can be used to read or write files that a user selects. Assuming *arguendo* some form of data is being processed by the CD ROM player, the floppy disk, or video conference system, there is no teaching or suggestion that such data is read *image data* as claimed.

Claim 8 further recites "*a management system* connected to each printing station via a network and used for *identifying management data of each printing station* and for distributing necessary data to each printing station." The Examiner cites server 195 and col. 6, lines 20-29 of Chen for teaching this aspect of the claim. In particular, the Examiner asserts that the server 195 is used for identifying reconfiguration application files of each kiosk 100 and for distributing application files to each kiosk 100. However, the respective column and lines cited by the Examiner discloses that a server can push the configuration set (application files) 175 to the kiosk. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that the server *identifies management data of each printing station.*

Claim 8 also recites "a currency processing unit, wherein said currency processing unit identifies currency inserted into the system, processes a cost to be charged to a client, and returns currency to the client." The Examiner asserts that since Chen discloses a cash dispenser 130 therefore, inherently one would recognize that the appropriate currency is returned to the user based on the fees and actual amount referenced by the user of the kiosk.

However, in order to rely upon the theory of inherency, the Examiner must show that the allegedly inherent characteristic *necessarily flows* from the teachings of the applied prior art. Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, merely because Chen discloses a cash dispenser does not mean Chen discloses "a currency processing unit, wherein said currency processing unit identifies currency inserted into the system, processes a cost to be charged to a client..." as recited in claim 8. In particular, Chen is directed to a system for banking, col. 6, lines 5-20, therefore, the dispensing of cash may operate similar to, for example, an ATM machine or a cash register. Such machines need not identify currency inserted into the system, process a cost to be charged to a client, and return currency to the client.

Claim 8 also recites "a server for turning the image data, being transmitted from each printing station to the management system, to a database and for storing the data." The Examiner concedes that Chen does not teach this aspect of the claim and cites Narayen to cure the deficiency.

In particular, the Examiner asserts that Narayen discloses a server 111 for turning the

image data, being transmitted from each printing station to the management system (i.e. ISP's

105, 107 and Web Server 109) to a database 110 and for storing the data.

Assuming *arguendo* Narayen teaches the claimed elements, as discussed above, Chen is

not at all concerned with managing image data. Moreover, Chen appears to disclose at most

storing data on a floppy diskette or a CD ROM. Therefore, it would not be obvious to modify

Chen to incorporate a database for image data storage. Moreover, modifying Chen to

incorporate the server and database of Narayen would result in a substantial modification of the

principle of operation of Chen which evidences that the Examiner's reasoning is merely a result

of impermissible hindsight.

For at least the above reasons, claim 8 and its dependent claims should be deemed

allowable.

Claim 18

Claim 18 recites "wherein said *image processing* comprises resolving a back light

photograph, correcting automatic color for adjusting technical peculiarities of a digital camera,

correcting shadow, correcting color balance, correcting photographic failure, enlarging or

reducing a size of image data, and removing noise." The Examiner asserts that Narayen, col. 1,

lines 24-25 and elements 59 and 271 in Fig. 6B and Photoshop from Adobe, teaches this aspect

of the claims.

However, in rejecting claim 18, the Examiner asserts that the claimed image processing is taught since data should be processed before being printed. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that such image processing for printing includes resolving a back light photograph, correcting automatic color for adjusting technical peculiarities of a digital camera, correcting shadow, correcting color balance, correcting photographic failure, enlarging or reducing a size of image data, and removing noise, as claimed. Moreover, it would not be obvious to modify Chen to include such processings, since as discussed above, Chen does not teach or suggest managing image data.

Moreover, merely because Narayan discloses permitting a user to edit images, such as adding or deleting pictures and changing a layout, does not teach or suggest resolving a back light photograph, correcting automatic color for adjusting technical peculiarities of a digital camera, correcting shadow, correcting color balance, correcting photographic failure, enlarging or reducing a size of image data, and removing noise.

For at least the above reasons, claim 18 should be deemed allowable.

II.   Rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Narayen and further in view of Kohda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,249,806).

As previously indicated, Narayen discloses a method and apparatus for distributing digital media over a network. A collection of digital media is generated and transmitted from a client digital processing system to a server digital processing system. Media is pregenerated that

is presentable to other client digital processing systems coupled to the network. See Narayen claim 1. For example, a photo album is created by a user from the user's home computer, then transmitted to a server which publishes the user's album as viewable HTML pages. Therefore, a user need not learn the HTML language, and multiple programs are not needed to publish pages on the Internet.

Claim 15 recites "a plurality of printing stations with functions to read digital image data, to print the data by performing necessary image processing and to transmit or receive the image data." The Examiner asserts that client computer systems 121, 125, 135, and 137 of Narayen teach the claimed plurality of printing stations and that any computer system, that can be considered a printing system, has the ability of performing the printing of the image data.

However, there is no indication that the client computer systems 121, 125, 135, and 137 perform image processing for the printing of digital image data. In particular, Narayen does not pertain to image processing as discussed above. Narayen merely distributes or publishes images from a digital acquisition device for viewing over a network.

Claim 15 further recites "a management system connected to each printing station via a network and used for identifying management data of each printing station and for distributing necessary data to each printing station." The Examiner asserts that the Internet service providers (ISP's) and the web server of Narayen teach the claimed management server. However, in Narayen, a connection between a client computer system and an ISP and web server is established when a user desires to create an online album. See Abstract. For example, client

computer systems 121, 125, 135, and 137 do not appear connected to the ISP and web server

unless a user at client computer system 121, 125, 135, or 137 desires to create or view an album.

Therefore, a management system is not connected to each printing station.

The Examiner also asserts that Narayen discloses "identifying management data of each

printing station," as recited in claim 15, citing col. 4, lines 27-32 and step 281 of Fig. 7 in

support. The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner describes that the Internet refers

to a network of networks which uses certain protocols such as TCP/IP and HTTP for HTML

documents. Step 281 of Fig. 7 describes that the client system from which the album will be

published, logs into a server system via a connection and this connection is typically via the

Internet. Therefore, Internet protocols are used between the client system and the server system.

However, there is no teaching or suggestion that a management system (allegedly the ISP's 105

and 107) identifies management data of each printing station.

Claim 15 also recites "wherein the image data turned to said database has image

categories as attribute information, and wherein said attribute information further comprises a

name, an age, a sex, an occupation, an address and a telephone number of an owner of the image

data."

The Examiner concedes that Narayen does not teach this aspect of the claim and cites

Kohda to cure the deficiency. However, Applicant submits that the combination of Kohda with

Narayen is not obvious.

Kohda is directed to an apparatus and method for providing information about two-way computer communication services. A plurality of user terminals regularly access Internet Relay Chat (IRC) services, and also communicate with a service selecting host. The service selecting host collects data from the plurality of user terminals. The collected data includes information about the users at the user terminals and information about the user terminals activity in accessing the IRC services. The service selecting host compiles and sorts the collected data to provide the terminals with information which allows the users to more easily select sorted IRC services. See Abstract. User data set 21 is stored in a user terminal and includes for example, attribute data indicative of sex, age, occupation and hobby of the user.

However, there is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art that would motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the IRC service selection of Kohda with the digital image distribution of Narayen. The Examiner's reasoning appears to merely be a result of impermissible hindsight. In particular, merely because Kohda teaches that attribute information is used to narrow down a selection of IRC services, does not teach "the image data turned to said database has image categories as attribute information," as recited in claim 15.

For at least the above reasons, claim 15 should be deemed allowable.

III. New Claims

Applicant has added claims 20-22 to provide a more varied scope of protection. Claims 20-22 should be deemed allowable by virtue of their dependency to claim 8 for the reasons set forth above.

IV.   Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed

to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is

kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue

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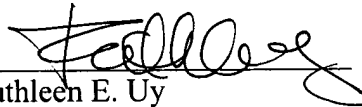
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